

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held in the Brierley Room at County Hall, Northallerton on Thursday, 20th July, 2023, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Carl Les (North Yorkshire Council) in the Chair; Chris Aldred (North Yorkshire Council), Lindsay Burr MBE (North Yorkshire Council), Tim Grogan (North Yorkshire Council), Emilie Knight (City of York Council), Rich Maw (North Yorkshire Council), Heather Moorhouse (North Yorkshire Council), Michael Pavlovic (City of York Council) and Peter Wilkinson (North Yorkshire Council).

Community Co-opted Members: Fraser Forsyth and Mags Godderidge.

In attendance: Jonathan Dyson (Chief Fire Officer) (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service) and Lisa Winward (Chief Constable) (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner: Zoë Metcalfe (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire), Simon Dennis (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Amanda Wilkinson (Director of Public Confidence) and Sarah Davies (Leadership Support to the Executive Team).

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Danny Myers (City of York Council) and Martin Walker (Co-opted Member), Tamara Pattinson and Michael Porter (Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

676 Election of Panel Chair

Resolved –

That Councillor Carl Les be elected to serve as Chair until July 2024.

677 Welcome and apologies

Councillor Carl Les in the Chair.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that the Commissioner, her OPFCC colleagues, the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer were joining remotely. Apologies were noted.

678 Declarations of Interest

Mags Godderidge declared that she is CEO of Survive; a charity which is commissioned by the OPFCC to provide services to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

679 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 21st June 2023

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

680 Election of Vice Chair to the Panel

Resolved –

That Councillor Danny Myers be elected to serve as Vice Chair until July 2024.

681 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel

Considered –

The progress report regarding issues raised by the Panel at previous meetings.

It was highlighted that all actions had been completed, save for item 2 regarding health surveillance of firefighters. A report will be made available on this later in the year and as such it was proposed that this be retained on the list as a rolling reminder that this is outstanding.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided and agrees that Items 1, 3 and 4 are completed; and
- (b) Retains item 2 (health surveillance of firefighters) on future reports until completed.

682 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

The Panel were advised that no public questions or statements had been received.

683 Members' Questions

Reassurance was sought from the Commissioner around re-vetting protocols within North Yorkshire Police (NYP). The Panel were advised that NYP was the first force last year, as part of a pilot scheme, to run every officer and staff member through the Police National Database. This process continues on a monthly basis. The Chief Constable outlined that anything arising from the monthly search is followed up with enquiries to other forces and with interviews for officers/staff as needed. The Panel heard that the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) oversees Professional Standards and receives a detailed report regularly of any staff or officers who are being considered for suspension. Simon Dennis also provided additional assurance around the delegated role of the Commissioner to himself and senior colleagues to meet regularly with the DCC, Force Solicitor and Head of Professional Standards on a closed circulation basis, to ensure opportunity to ask questions and review the data more thoroughly. It was agreed that the Panel will be provided with:

- redacted statistics on the numbers of officers and staff currently suspended due to investigations;
- statistics on those officers who have appeared before the Chief Constable on accelerated misconduct hearings and have been dismissed and also those who have appeared before a legally qualified Chair and the outcomes of these (it was noted that this data is also available online).

The Commissioner was also asked about the application of the 'Right Care, Right Person' model, recently introduced at NYP. The Panel discussed the development of the national agreement, which is founded on diverting a number of mental health/welfare calls away from the police and ensuring that the health service steps in as needed. Members expressed concern that third sector agencies had not been involved in consultation on the national agreement, particularly as a number of very vulnerable people are not linked in to statutory agencies/NHS but are linked in to third sector agencies and who will continue at points to need an urgent welfare check. The Chief Constable sought to reassure that the police will still act where this support is required. The Commissioner agreed to provide the Panel with a briefing on the model and also to drill down into why the third sector had not been engaged in early conversations around application of the model.

Members asked about PCSO recruitment and when communities can expect to see the NYP development plan. The Panel heard that an organisational review of NYP is underway. It had also been identified that NYP has the highest percentage PCSO workforce in the country and as such the Chief Constable felt it important to further review demand statistics and the evidence base. A lot of time and money had been spent in recent years on PCSO campaigns which were often unsuccessful. The Chief Constable intends to review what is needed for the organisation, consider where posts are needed locally and then re-open recruitment. The Panel is due to review the outcomes of the organisational review early next year.

Further to a Member query regarding how residents are supported and accounted for following large-scale fires, the Chief Fire Officer outlined the involvement of the local authority and the Local Resilience Forum in ensuring communications are adequately maintained once the fire service has been out.

The Commissioner was further asked for data on police response times and clarity on how these are being measured and over what time period. It was also highlighted that residents would like to see data on how the police are dealing with County Lines, shoplifting and burglaries. Cllr Burr also requested a meeting with the Commissioner to address longstanding locality concerns. The Commissioner agreed to do this and also to provide the data requested, although it was noted that this data is also available online.

Resolved –

That the Panel will, prior to its next meeting:

- (a) receive redacted statistics on the numbers of officers and staff currently suspended due to investigations;
- (b) receive statistics on those officers who have appeared before the Chief Constable on accelerated misconduct hearings and have been dismissed and also those who have appeared before a legally qualified Chair and the outcomes of these;
- (c) receive a briefing regarding the Right Care, Right Person model and the involvement of the third sector in its development and application; and

- (d) receive data outlining police response times (with clarity on how these are measured and over what time period) and data on how shoplifting, County Lines and burglaries are being tackled.

684

Draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2022/23

Considered –

The Commissioner's draft Annual Report for Policing and Crime 2022/23.

The Commissioner introduced the draft report, highlighting a number of key areas of progress against the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan over the last year, including:

- Work underway as a result of the strategy to tackle violence against women and girls;
- NYP's efforts to improve its holistic understanding of communities, intervening early and problem-solving;
- The introduction of the Initial Enquiry Team, which has seen a high level of customer satisfaction;
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusivity at the heart of the organisation's culture.

The Panel's legal role is to review and make recommendations on the draft. Panel members therefore raised specific queries and provided recommendations to the Commissioner on the draft content as follows:

- a) It was felt that hate crime and County Lines needed to have greater profile within the report.
- b) Members suggested that it may help to bring the progress updates to life more if additional case studies could be incorporated. On a related note, it was felt that specific examples could have been provided of the positive work undertaken around the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.
- c) Members commended the use of the police property fund (page 16) and an observation was that this could have been given greater profile due to its positive impact.
- d) It is helpful to have the data on complaints resolved by the Complaints and Recognition Team (page 6) but Members felt it might also be useful to understand how long on average it has taken to resolve complaints, if this data can also be made available.
- e) It was highlighted that the section on domestic abuse and the force's improvements in safeguarding would benefit from more specific illustration to bring out what is being done and how things have been improved.
- f) The Panel observed that only 50% of respondents to the public trust and confidence survey either agreed or strongly agreed that they had been fairly treated in their dealings with the police. It was noted that both the Panel and public would benefit from further information on how this is happening over the coming months. Additionally, Members noted the relatively low completion rate for the survey and queried whether the approach to the survey could be reviewed to encourage a greater number of responses.
- g) It was highlighted that the Supporting Victims service is actually available by phone from 8am to 7pm over the phone (and not 9am to 5pm as indicated on page 15) and that the reference to the Adult Sexual Assault Referral service also needs to more specifically include mention that a similar service is available to children.

The Commissioner thanked the Panel for their comments, which she agreed to consider further before finalising the report. The Panel raised a couple of other points for broader review going forward.

- h) It would be helpful to receive further data in due course in relation to the Initial Enquiry Team at NYP in terms of proportions of calls handled and directed away from the main Force Control Room.
- i) Some Members wished to note that engagement with PCSOs at parish council level could be rather patchy and that they would welcome further engagement, although other Members felt that relationships at a local level were working effectively. The Panel welcomed the Chief Constable's commitment to ensuring that parish councils have attendance at least once a year from a PCSO or similar representative.

Overall, the Panel felt that the draft report read well and is accessible to communities, with many positive examples of progress made against the Police and Crime Plan.

Resolved –

That the Panel recommends that the draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2022/23 be approved, subject to the Commissioner's further consideration of the issues raised.

685

Draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2022/23

Considered –

The Commissioner's draft Annual Report for Fire and Rescue 2022/23.

The Commissioner introduced the draft report simultaneously to that for Policing and Fire, noting a number of areas of progress against the Fire and Rescue Plan over the last year, including:

- Investment made to the fire estate;
- Improvements in the data that is held and used;
- Work undertaken to make the fire and rescue service (FRS) an employer of choice.

Members noted that the responses to the public trust and confidence survey had been particularly low for the FRS and that the Commissioner is working to enhance this going forward.

Members welcomed that the draft at page 18 noted the work done nationally to bring about a statutory basis for all fire and rescue staff members to undertake an appropriate level of DBS check. However, it was felt that the report would benefit from further clarity as to the position locally on this, namely whether and when this will be taken forward. The Chief Fire Officer explained that this has just been agreed nationally and that the service locally has ensured that it is well placed financially to undertake checks for firefighters. The Panel heard that there is ongoing dialogue nationally around this matter in terms of what level vetting is undertaken to and when, and that the service locally will then need to consider how it continues to meet this requirement. It was agreed that further information on this matter would be made available to the Panel once the position is finalised in due course.

Overall, Members felt that the draft report read well and that its content and language are accessible to communities with positive examples of progress made against the Fire and Rescue Plan.

Resolved –

That the Panel recommends that the draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2022/23 be approved, subject to the Commissioner's further consideration of the issues raised.

686

Review of the balanced appointment objective

Considered –

The report of the Panel Secretariat updating on the latest position as regards how well the Panel is meeting the 'balanced appointment objective' in terms of its membership.

The Panel is in a robust position as regards political proportionality following the recent round of appointments by constituent authorities. It was highlighted that there is notionally a gap in geographic representation in North Yorkshire. However, the Panel has a slightly better gender balance than previously and has also ensured continuation of knowledge and expertise with four returning Members and that as these are also key factors to take into account, the geographical factor is arguably within tolerance for the time being. Additionally, adjustments to membership can be difficult to achieve and, when co-options are sought through the Home Office this can be a lengthy process. As such the Panel were not recommended to seek to make further adjustments.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the updated position as regards meeting the 'balanced appointment objective'; and
- (b) Agrees that no further adjustments will be made to its membership for 2023/24.

687

Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2022/23

Considered –

The draft Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2022/23.

Members commended the draft as a fair and helpful demonstration of its work over the last year. It was agreed that a précis of the report, with a link to the full report, should be sent to all Members in both constituent authorities.

The Panel considered the issue of public engagement and it was noted that this has been heightened at points on specific issues such as the sale of the former Police HQ. Members were also advised that social media messaging is issued through North Yorkshire Council several days prior to meetings, to help raise public awareness, and that perhaps it would be helpful to share this messaging with Members so that they can also flag up within their communities.

Resolved –

That the Panel approves the draft Annual Report of the Panel for 2022/23.

688 Governance changes to the Panel

Considered –

A report from the Panel Secretariat highlighting recent updates to the Panel's governance documentation, including provision for a Substitute Member scheme.

Members agreed that involvement in the Panel is a steep learning curve and that it could be difficult for Members to step in without any prior training or development. It was therefore recommended that Substitute Members are included in any training made available to Panel Members.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the update paper on governance changes to the Panel.

689 Work Programme

Considered –

The report from the Panel Secretariat outlining the Panel's programme of work.

The following items were suggested for inclusion at future meetings:

- Commissioning services for victims, in terms of ensuring that the right service is delivering the right intervention to victims of crime.
- County Lines.
- Right to Protest in terms of how well the Commissioner feels this is being policed in the area.

Resolved –

That the Panel agrees the outline work programme, with the addition of the items highlighted in the meeting.

690 Any other items

The Panel were advised that no urgent business had been notified to the Chair.

691 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 12th October 2023 at 10:30am – City of York Council West Offices.

The meeting concluded at 12.09 pm.
DP.